

## **DECLARATION**

### **OF THE MINISTERS OF TOURISM OR HEADS OF DELEGATIONS OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

**We, Ministers of Tourism or Heads of Delegations of the Republic of Albania, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, Hellenic Republic, Romania, Russian Federation, Republic of Turkey and Ukraine, gathered here in Tirana/Albania, having regard to:**

**\* The Istanbul Decennial Summit Declaration, held on 25 June 2002 in Istanbul;**

**\* The BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future: Towards a More Consolidated, Effective and Viable BSEC Partnership, adopted by the Council of Minister of Foreign Affairs in Moscow on 27 April 2001;**

**\* The Declaration of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg on 25 August till 5 September 2002 and the initiative “Sustainable Tourism as a tool for Eliminating Poverty” presented by the Secretary General of the World Tourism Organisation in the above mentioned Summit;**

**\* The other relevant documents, principles, guidelines and codes of ethics for sustainable tourism, such as those proposed by World Tourism Organisation (WTO), UNEP, UN Commission on Sustainable Development.**

**And bearing in mind that:**

**A. The BSEC area has a great and very promising potential in Tourism;**

**B. Tourism has a very significant and complex role to play in the economic, social and environmental fields of our countries;**

**C. Tourism is the major growing contributor to jobs, wealth, investments and cultural understanding;**

**D. Important progress has been achieved in tourism during the last decade by all BSEC Member States in general, and by some countries in particular;**

**E. Tourism has proved to be and, with the long- term forecast study of WTO, is foreseen to be a leading industry in the world economy in general, and in the economy of our countries in particular,**

**F. The development of tourism in the BSEC area will actively contribute to the alleviation of poverty by capacity building especially in the local communities of many BSEC Member States.**

**G. The necessary precondition for the development of tourism cooperation across the BSEC region is stability and security that can be achieved only by means of just and lasting settlement of disputes and conflicts on the basis of norms and principals of international law.**

**Agreed on the following principles and actions for the enhancement of Tourism in our region:**

**1. Our main strategic marketing objective will be to position the BSEC area as a tourism destination to the world tourism**

**market and to stimulate and strengthen the image of our region as a unique and very attractive destination by organizing a search meeting to set the priorities of integrated destinations;**

**2. The development in the field of the tourism in the BSEC area, needs to embrace some major objectives such as promoting the neglected natural, cultural and heritage sites alongside with the improvement of the quality tourism facilities and services and the protection and sustainable development of the natural, cultural and heritage resources;**

**3. The increase of investments in domestic and regional markets in the field of tourism is of vital importance and needs our commitment to further facilitate the legal and fiscal framework for the private and public investments in accordance with our internal legislation and without prejudice to our international obligations;**

**4. We declare our commitment to support SMEs operating in the tourism sector, which often face a multitude of administrative and other barriers and create for them an enabling environment so they can start and develop their business in a sustainable manner;**

**5. We recognize that access to credit is one of the most serious issues facing SMEs operating in the tourism sector. The search for financial support from domestic and international sources and in particular from BSTDB will be in the focus of our future work;**

**6. We confirm our commitment for a closer cooperation in the future in the field of tourism, on a bilateral and multilateral basis. We estimate that the BSEC Project Implementation Mechanism launched recently will be the focus for our joint projects. The opportunity to take advantage from the Project Development Fund will have our future attention;**

**7. We agree to exchange best practices of our regulatory mechanisms, experiences, successful projects in the field of**

**tourism, within the two-year Tourism Action Plan by means of communications through the PERMIS, Seminars and other special events with particular interest to the BSEC Member States;**

**8. We commit ourselves to achieve sustainable development in all forms of tourism in the BSEC region, by paying attention to the sensitivity of our natural/heritage environment and the need to preserve biodiversity, culture, tradition and social life styles;**

**9. We commit ourselves that the future formulation of national, regional and local policies and the development strategies will be compatible with the overall objectives of sustainable development. We encourage transparent planning of integrated destinations that will bring about a sustainable capacity building at the local level;**

**10. We express our commitment to observe and insure that diversified tourism products be developed and managed in our countries in a sustainable manner, so they can bring a very important opportunity for local populations, for their cultures and for the conservation of environment for the future generations;**

**11. The development and the promotion of education and training programs is an important mean to achieve quality and efficiency in tourism. To this end the cooperation between the BSEC PERMIS and Bogazici University WTO Education and Training Centre is important;**

**12. Our engagement for a better cooperation on promotional strategies and programs carried out by the National Tourism Administrations, both in regional and domestic markets;**

**13. We invite the Organization of the BSEC to take into account this Declaration in the process of implementing the BSEC Economic Agenda;**

**14. We invite the BSEC WG on Cooperation in Tourism to review regularly, in the framework of the Tourism Action Plan, the implementation of this Declaration;**

**15. We forward this Declaration to the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and to the Governments of the BSEC Member States;**

**16. We agree to meet whenever appropriate, to consider the matters related to tourism cooperation in the BSEC area. The date and the venue of such meetings will be decided in cooperation with BSEC PERMIS;**

**17. We express our gratitude to the host country for the excellent arrangements provided to all the delegations of the BSEC Member States and other Bodies and for its important contribution to the success of this Meeting.**

**Adopted in Tirana, on 27 September 2002.**